THE Frailty and Uncertainty OF THE LIFE of MAN.

Delivered in a

SERMON

At the Funeral of a Person that Dyed Suddainly.

By *WILLIAM BUSH*, Minister of the Gospel.

1 Pet. 1. 24.

Διότι πᾶσα σὰρξ ὡς χόρτος, καὶ πᾶσα δόξα ἀνθρώπου ὡς ἄνθος χόρτου· ἐξηράνθη ὁ χόρτος, καὶ τὸ ἄνθος αὐτοῦ ἐξέπεσε.

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BODLEIANA

TO THE AUDITORS Of this SERMON.

Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christians,

When once I had resolv'd to make this Discourse publick, I immediately concluded to dedicate it unto you, hoping that what you heard with so much satisfaction, you would willingly take pains to read. And as I can appeal to Almighty God,

that I preached it with no other deſign but to profit your Souls; ſo have I no other end in the publiſhing of it, and this it was that chiefly mov'd me to it, it being a thing altogether contrary to my inclination to appear in Print. The truths herein contained, are (I dare to ſay) leſs practiſed than known and believed: for it cannot enter into my thoughts, that any perſon of reaſon thinks that he is not always ſubject to Death: Scripture and Example do ſo fully prove it, nay a Heathen could ſay, when inform'd of the death of his Son, I knew I begot one that muſt dye. *But yet notwithſtanding, O how few are preparing themſelves for this great Change! When we look abroad into the World and ſee Perſons living in groſs & ſcandalous ſins; ſuch as are, breaking the Sabbath, Swearing, Curſing, Lying, Drunkenneſs, Debauchery, Pride and Covetouſneſs, and the like abominable tranſgreſſions, may we not conclude that theſe think not of Death and Eternity, nor of giving an account to the great God, of all their provocations where-*

with

with they offend him? The Swearer may be cut off whilſt the Oath is in his mouth, and whilſt the poor wretch is calling upon God to damn him, he may have what he calls for; God may ſtop his breath, and throw him immediately into Hell: and ſo may all the reſt of ſinners be taken away in the midſt of their ſins and tranſgreſſions, even whileſt they are committing them. Now what a ſad conſideration is it, that notwithſtanding our lives are thus frail and uncertain, and ſubject to be taken from us every moment; yet ſinners will not be perſwaded to repent and turn to God. O my Friends! if there be any ſuch among you, for Chriſt's ſake let me prevail upon you to forſake your ſins, and ſeek for pardoning mercy: don't delay it any longer, you have heard how dangerous delays are, Hell (as one ſays) is full of delayed purpoſes; you that ſay you will repent hereafter, or to morrow, may be in Hell this night, in the midſt of everlaſting burnings, and then you will be paſt mer-

cy:

cy: *Whereas if you improve your time well now, you may make your peace with God; by diligence, your Calling and Election may be made sure: O then be wise in time, to consider the things that belong to your everlasting peace, before it be too late; before the Bridge of Mercy be drawn, before the Door of Hope be shut against you. I observ'd (when I preached to you) that tears did fall from many of your Eyes. O that I could say that what was then spoken, reached your Hearts and Consciences. O that the Lord would be pleased to set in with the Word, that it might become effectual to your Conversion; O that it might make you out of love with sin, and prevail upon you to live so as to be fit to dye, when you come to dye.*

I understand I have incurr'd the displeasure of some for preaching to you, and am accounted to be a person that endeavours by my bawling (as they are pleased to term it) to make Proselytes to my own opinion: But I value not their anger, so I may but be instrumental

mental to bring home poor ſinners to Chriſt; indeed I deſire the ill will of none, but if I am hated for loving my God, and the ſouls of ſinners, I ſhall bear it patiently: Sure I am that none that are Chriſtians indeed will be my Adverſaries, though their Judgments may be differing from mine. Now 'tis known to many that I never endeavour'd either in my preaching, or converſe, to perſwade perſons to my own way, but to prevail upon them (if I could) to live holily, and to walk cloſely with God; and as I have often declar'd, ſo do I now, that I love no Man the worſe for his differing from me in Opinion, ſo that I ſee him to be one that lives in the fear of the Lord, as becometh a Chriſtian: for he (as one ſays) that ſuffers his difference with his Neighbour, about the other world, to carry him beyond the line of moderation, in this, is the worſe for his Opinion, even though it be true: You are alſo my witneſſes in this matter. Did I ſay any thing to you, by way of perſwaſion, to this or that Opini-

on?

on? No, all that I deſign'd, was to make you more ſenſible of the frailty of your lives, and to perſwade you to Repent, & become Holy. But now the diſcourſe it ſelf will clear me from this aſperſion. If any Reader ſhould object againſt this, and ſay it may be it is not publiſhed as it was preached, I anſwer (if I may be believed,) it is, and that exactly, both as to matter, and words, the errors of printing being excepted. I now requeſt one thing of you, and that is this, that you would lay aſide all prejudice, and read this Diſcourſe ſeriouſly; lay theſe Truths up in your Hearts, and practiſe them in your Lives, and then, I am ſure, it will be well with your Souls to Eternity. Live holily, and then when you come to dye, you will dye happily, and ſhall be admitted into Glory, where you will be for ever with the Lord: which God (for Chriſt's ſake) grant you may all enjoy. This is, and always ſhall be the hearty conſtant Prayer of

Your Servant in the
Goſpel of Chriſt Jeſus,
W. B U S H.

[redacted]

THE Frailty and Uncertainty OF THE LIFE of MAN.

JAMES iv. lat. part 14. ver.

For what is your life? it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away.

CErtainly if we that are here at this time, were fully perſwaded, that a few moments more might lodge us in Eternity, we ſhould (if we had any regard to our Souls) begin to do ſomething in order to a preparation

for ſo great a Change: And inſtead of minding the concerns of the World, ſhould imploy that little time in endeavouring to make our peace with God, and to get an aſſurance in Jeſus Chriſt. Know then, O Souls, that this is the meſſage my God hath ſent me to deliver, Go tell them that they are bordering upon Eternity, and 'tis in vain for them to think of a long continuance here, for their lives are but like to a Vapour that appeareth for a little time; and then vaniſheth away: and if they dye in their Sins, nothing can keep them out of Hell, where they muſt be tormented in the flames of my Vengance for ever.

The Apoſtle in the 13*th* verſe begins to reprove ſuch as undertake humane, or worldly actions with vain, peremptory, carnal confidence, without dependance upon the Providence of God: Go to now, ye that ſay to Day or to Morrow

Morrow we will go into ſuch a City, and continue there a Year, and Buy and Sell, and get gain: as if he had ſaid, You that pleaſe your ſelves in the vain thoughts, of thoſe carnal projects, and ſucceſſes which you brag, and boaſt ſo much of, conſider, that your time and lives are not your own, neither do you know what may come to paſs on the morrow; by to morrow you may be on your death Beds, nay, by to morrow you may be in Hell, and then your deſigns are ſpoil'd, and your purpoſes defeated: for for this life that you ſo much depend upon, is frail, and uncertain, 'tis but like a Vapour, or Smoke, as the original word Ἀτμὶς ſignifies, which no ſooner appears, but it immedately vaniſheth away; ſuch a thing is the Life of Man.

Vid. Clark in loc.

ver. 14.

Talis res eſt vita noſtra & ipſa fragilis, brevis incerta; & nullis caſibus ſubdita. Vid. Pool. in loc.

The Doctrine that I ſhall diſcourſe of, from the words, is this.

Doct. *That nothing is more fading, nor more uncertain than the Life of Man.*

In ſpeaking to this Doctrine I ſhall only do theſe two things in general;

First prove it, And
Secondly apply it.

I ſhall be but brief in proving the Doctrine, the Application being that which I chiefly intend: therefore the reaſons that I ſhall give you will be only theſe two.

The firſt may be drawn from thoſe things that the Scripture uſually compares the Life of Man unto: ſometimes we find it compared to a ſhadow; *Pſal.* 109. 23. ſometimes to Graſs and the Flowers there-

thereof, as in 1 *Peter* 1. 24. that is no ſooner cut down, but it immediately fadeth, and withereth away; and to many other things is it likened to in Scripture, all which denote the fadingneſs and uncertainty thereof: And here in my Text it is compared to a Vapour, that no ſooner appears, but it immediately diſappears: and though we are in Health and Strength at preſent, and have all the ſymptoms of a long Life, yet we may be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an Eye. O ſinner, when thou lyeſt down at night, thou art not ſure of being out of Hell till next morning: the ye worldlings, that are following hard after the World, and are propoſing to your ſelves how to increaſe your poſſeſſions, remember you may be ſnatched away in the highth of your buſineſs, and thrown into everlaſting burnings, into eternal torments, from whence all

your Goods, and Poſſeſſions (if the whole world were yours) would not purchaſe you a releaſe, no, nor mitigate your miſery: ye Proud Ones, that ſpend the greateſt part of your precious time in decking, and adorning your Bodies, conſider this Body in a ſhort time muſt be meat for Worms, and turn'd into duſt and rottenneſs, and their poor ſouls puniſhed for their ſins, in the eternal flames of God's vengeance. O all ye that forget God, I beſeech you conſider what fading, periſhing Creatures you are, what brittle lives you have, and how ſoon, how ſuddenly you may be changed.

Theſe cond reaſon may be drawn from the daily examples that we have of the frailty and uncertainty on our lives: call to mind the ſuddain deaths of your Relations, Acquaintance, and Friends of thoſe that you have ſeen, and heard of

that

that have been ſuddainly ſnatched away, that have been free from all Pain, and Sickneſs one day, and dead the next; nay, ſome in a ſome in few minutes ſpace have been lanched into Eternity, when as no ſymptoms of death have been diſcerned: we may have our breath ſtopt before we breath another breath, or ſpeak another word: remember the many and ſuddain accidents we are ſubject unto: as we walk by the way, a Tile may fall from the Houſe top, and end our days immedately: by a fall we may be mortally wounded, or a ſecret enemy may ſuddainly deſtroy us: the diſeaſes too, that do attend our Bodies, (which are the Officers and Serjeants of Death) do not always allow us time, and wear us away by degrees, but ſuddainly, many times, make an end of us; we know not but the obſtructions, and ſtoppages of the Lungs and Liver, an Apoplexy, Judg. 3. 15. to 23.

the killing tortures of the Stone, or ſome ſuch bitter diſtemper may immediately diſpatch us as they have done many before us: and further, neither does our Youth nor Beauty, our Health, nor Wealth, our Honour or Greatneſs exempt us from Death, which evidenceth that all our lives are thus frail, and uncertain: we ſee daily that the young and the ſtrong, as well as the aged and infirm, the noble as well as the mean, the Phyſician as well as the Patient ſuddainly taken off: and though this be that which we ſeem not to believe, by the practice of our lives; yet we ſhall find that God's people did own and believe this Fraily. We find
Gen. 18. 27 that *Abraham* in his perfect health termeth himſelf but Duſt and Aſhes:
Pſal. 119. 9. and certainly it was this conſideration, that made the Pſalmiſt to ſay, That his life was always in his hand.

Thus

Thus have I proved the Doctrine, that there is nothing more fading, nor more uncertain than the Life of Man: And that by Scripture, and Example.

But ſome may object, we ſee ſome that live to old Age, to 60, 70, 80. or 90. years, and why may not we live as long as they have done before us; we are altogether as likely, being free from thoſe diſeaſes that uſually bring perſons to their Graves.

I anſwer, how prone are we to deceive our ſelves? God indeed is able to preſerve you alive many years: but conſider, does not daily experience teach you that where one lives to ſee 60. or 70. or 80. years, there are hundreds that never live to ſee 40. nor 20. nor 10. and as for the likelineſs of your living long, ſure you have forgot, that Man in his beſt State, in his greateſt Strength, and

Vid. Clark in loc.

and flouriſhing condition, is altogether vanity, *Pſal.* 39. 5. You are now as ſubject to Death, as if your Bodies were full of diſeaſes and diſtempers, how may times do we ſee the weak and infirm to live, whilſt the ſtrong and the healthy are ſnatched away? we ſee that often verified, *Job* 21. 23. one dieth in his full ſtrength, being wholly at eaſe and quiet: this therefore is but a pitiful objection, that which does not at all leſſen this great truth, That Man is a moſt fading, periſhing creature, neither will any Man of reaſon build his hopes of a long life upon ſo ſandy a fondation.

I now come to the Application: Is it ſo that man's life is thus fading, and ſubject to vaniſh away: then firſt this reproves thoſe that think themſelves ſecure. 'Tis to be fear'd that many are yet perſwading themſelves, that they ſhall live long, and continue many years, and drive away the

the thoughts of their latter end, that though they ſee perſons dye daily, & find themſelves ſubject to diſeaſes and dangers, yet think that death is far from them: poor ſouls what priviledge do you think belongs to you more than to others? what renders you more ſafe than your fellow Creatures? why ſhould you imagine that death ſhould be now grown partial, who never yet reſpected any perſon, but comes as boldly to the mightieſt Monarch, as to the meaneſt, and pooreſt creature? Deceive not your ſelves, you are as ſubject to death as others, your lives as well as others are but vapours: nay, let me tell you, you that think leaſt of dying, may be neareſt death, when you ſay, Peace and ſafety, then ſuddain deſtruction cometh upon you. Now would you not account that man worthy of reproof, that being often warned of an approaching danger, and directed how to eſcape 1 Theſ. 5. 3.

ſcape it, yet notwitſtanding ſhould willfully run himſelf into it? Ye fools and unwiſe, this is your caſe, you have been often warned of your latter end, and of the frailty of your lives, and preſſed to ſpeedy repentance, and turning unto God; and you have been told of the danger of dying in your ſins, and yet you go on, and are ſaying within your ſelves, we believe that repentance is neceſſary to ſalvation, but 'tis time enough to think of that many years hence: we believe that God is pleaſed with ſuch as in ſincerity walk in his ways, that pray in their Families, that keep the Sabbaths, that attend upon the means of Grace, that mind Heaven more than the World, and are doing what they can to lay up for themſelves a treaſure in Heaven, rather than on Earth: but we have time enough before us, we may yet ſpend a great many years in plea-

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ſures, and gratifie our Luſts, and pleaſe our *S*enſes, and follow hard after the world; and then when we are old, begin to think of theſe things. O how many make ſuch Propoſals, but now death comes, and gives you an arreſt, and tells you your days are ended, and you muſt away, what will you ſay then: O *S*ouls, will you reaſon with Death, O we are not yet prepared to dye, we have done nothing yet for our poor Souls, we are not yet reconciled to God, we have not made our peace with him, which we deſigned to have done, but that you come long before we did expect you: O ſpare us a little longer. Go take the aged that are dropping into their Graves, and meddle not with us that have not yet lived out halfour days: 'tis in vain,Sirs,to parly with him, you you muſt remove into Eternity,and then we ſhall have you of another mind,

mind, then you will wiſh, O that we had ſome of thoſe many Sabbaths, that we have miſ-ſpent, and miſ-improved! O that we might hear ſome of thoſe awakning Sermons that we have heard! O that we had a few weeks of thoſe many years that we have ſpent in ſin now, that we might prepare our ſelves for Death and Eternity! then you will wiſh, O that inſtead of being angry at the reproofs of God's Miniſters, concerning our ſecurity, we had taken them timely, and repented! but then, O Souls, all theſe are but vain wiſhes, now no more Sabbaths, no more Sermons, no more Time; O what a diſmal caſe are ſuch poor Souls in, how full of terrour, then they cry out, Mercy, mercy, Lord, for dying Souls! O ſpare us a little longer, Lord, take us not away in the midſt of our ſins; O Lord, try us, thou ſhalt ſee how we will deſpiſe the world, and the vanities thereof, thou ſhalt

ſee

ſee how we will improve our time, and uſe the means that thou haſt appointed for our Souls good. O we will no more be prayer-leſs Souls, nor regard-leſs of our Salvation: We will break no more Sabbaths; We will watch over our hearts, and ways, and order our converſation aright. But the time is come that you muſt go hence, and therefore all theſe promiſes are made too late: then you will wiſh that you had liv'd in a dayly expectation of Death, then you will lament your former ſecurity, and unbelief of the frailty of your lives: then you will think of thoſe offers of Grace, and tenders of Mercy, that God in Chriſt many times made to you, and you refuſed to accept of them, and thus will you be hurried away, from theſe miſeries to greater, even into endleſs and intolerable torments, what think you of this now, ye ſecure ones, that promiſe to your ſelves

along life. Believe me, this night for ought you know, before you lye down, God may ſend this terrible meſſenger, Death, to command you hence: and you that are propoſing to your ſelves what you will do many years hence, may be in Hell before to morrow. Let me prevail upon you to believe your ſelves ſubject every moment to be taken out of this world, that ſo you may be always preparing and making ready for Eternity, that when Death comes, he may not ſurpriſe you, but that you may be ready and willing to depart hence, having made your peace with God, and being ſure of a ſaving intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt.

2*ly*. It reproves thoſe that are immoderately ſeeking after the things of this world. O what labour and pains do many perſons take, to get a great deal of the things of this

Life,

Life, heaping Treaſure upon Treaſure, juſt as if they were not mortal Creatures, as if they were to continue here to Eternity, and when God calls upon them by Sickneſs, or by Conſcience, and by frequent warnings of their mortality, why, they are ſtill buſie, either they are upon a Purchaſe, or have hired a Farm, they muſt traid and get gain, they muſt lay up whilſt young for old Age, and what tell ſuch of praying, and hearing, and repentance, and obedience to God, alas! they have no time for ſuch things; tell them of minding their Souls ſalvation, why they have other things to do, and inſtead of ſaying *what will it profit us if we gain the whole world and loſe our Souls*, they are ſaying, what will it profit us if we ſave our Souls and loſe the world? But now, Sirs, Death comes in the midſt of this hurry and ſtops your breath, and ſpoyls your deſigns, and then the poor creatures are undone to Eternity, and made miſerable forever. Mark 8. 36.

While they are resolving to pull down their Barns and build greater, God comes and tells them, ye Fools, *this night your souls shall be required of you*: then you and your beloved treasures must be parted, then you can buy no more bargains, nor get no more unjust gain, nor oppress the Poor and the Fatherless, but shall be for ever tormented in the flames of Gods vengeance. O then are not you worthy of reproof, that will wilfully be the Authors of your own damnation, for the love of that which at the best is no better than vanity? may you dye the next moment, and yet do you resolve to take no care of your poor Souls? Alas! what fools are ye, Sirs? what will your riches profit you when you come to lye upon a death-bed, when your Bodies are full of pain, and your Consciences terrified for your sins, and your undone state? O no good at all. I have read of a poor worldling, that lying on his death-bed, call'd for his bags of

Luk. 12. 20.

Eccles 1. 2.

of Gold, which when brought he laid them to his breaſt, as near as he could to his heart, but after they had layn a while he gave them back again, ſaying, Here take them again, take them again, theſe will not do, theſe will not do: Theſe will afford you no eaſe, nor comfort, and when you come into Eternity, what help do you think to find from your Riches? Becauſe you were rich in the world, do you think that God will regard you e're the more? no, no, if he finds you in your ſins, if you have the whole world, you muſt to Hell. Let me beſeech you to grow more moderate to the world, and having Food and Raiment let us be therewith content; and if God give any overplus, employ it in doing good to your fellow-Creatures, place not your affections on the world, but while your lives are continued think of your poor Souls. And tho' you are now unwilling to have your following thus exceſſively

Job. 36. 19

1 Tim. 6. 8.

after the world, yet remember, when you come to Hell, it will greatly aggravate your torments, that you have damn'd your precious and immortal Souls, for ſuch fading periſhing vanities; that you ſhould moil and toil, and ſweat, and break your Peace, to make your ſelves eternally miſerable: in a word, what a ſad conſideration will it be to you, that you have taken pains to bring eternal Judgment upon your ſelves! and methinks (as one ſays) the name of eternal Judgment, ſhould awaken every unregenerate man out of his ſecurity, and ſtir him up without further delay to abandon his wicked, and ungodly courſe of life, and to ſet upon the practice of all holy and religious duties, and to labour therein, to get the work of regeneration wrought in his heart, that he may become a new Creature. O therefore when you are tempted to love the world, and to ſpend all your time in minding nothing but earth,

ſay

ſay to your ſelves, Why ſhould we bring upon our ſelves endleſs Torments, for thoſe Things that will laſt but for a moment? Why ſhould we (for that which we muſt ſoon part with,) part with God, and Chriſt, and Heaven, and Glory, and a bleſſed Eternity?

3*dly*. It reproves thoſe that are endeavouring to perſwade others of a long Life, that cannot be contented to ruine themſelves, but would fain bring others to deſtruction; and this is commonly the Subject of Perſons Diſcourſes to the Sick, Come, I don't doubt but you'll recover, and live many Years; don't diſquiet your ſelf with the ſad Thoughts of Death and Eternity, 'twill hinder your Amendment, but be cheerful; and this Diſcourſe is uſually pleaſing, very few can endure to hear of Death, and account thoſe Perſons troubleſome Viſitors, that put them in mind thereof: And probably, this may be the Reaſon, why Perſons, when they are

Sick, never ſend for the Miniſter till they are fetching their laſt Breath; for they conclude, that if they come, they will be talking of nothing but another World, and perſwading them to prepare for Death, and Eternity; and therefore they are for no ſuch Company, till they find they are juſt ready, as it were, to depart, and then the Miniſter is ſent for; but then 'tis uſually too late, the Soul is going away in its Sins, and 'tis eternally undone. Now, what beſotted Creatures are we, that will believe ſuch Flatteries, to imagine that thoſe that muſt Die themſelves, can aſſure us of Life? And in this reſpect, many Phyſicians are much to blame, who make their Patients believe that they are not in danger of Death, as if they could give Life at their Pleaſure, or as if we were not periſhing Creatures; alas we are always in danger of Death, but certainly thoſe Perſons are greatly to blame, that neglect to prepare for Death, ſo long as their Doctors give them

them hopes of Life; for how frequently do thoſe Die under their Hands, that they have fed up with the vain aſſurances of a Recovery; and as one ſays, in ſuch a Caſe, the miſtaken Phyſician will find it much eaſier to ſave his Credit, than the poor Sinner to ſave his Soul. And now let me ſpeak a Word, or two, to thoſe Perſons, that make it their Practice thus to deceive others; conſider, what a dreadful Account you have to give of this abominable Practice, at the Bar of the great God; know then, that theſe poor Creatures that you have perſwaded to neglect to prepare for Death, and were taken away in their Sins, will loudly witneſs againſt you, as guilty of the Blood of their precious Souls; for when God ſhall call them forth, and ſay, Why did not you improve the long warning I gave you of your end, by endeavouring to get the Pardon of your Sins, in making your Peace with God, and in labouring for a ſaving Intereſt in Je-

ſus Chriſt; you cannot ſay you were hurried out of the World, that your firſt Meſſenger was Death; but you had many Months of Sickneſs, as a warning of your end. & yet, now I find you among the Goats; what Plea can you make for your ſelves? Then will theſe poor Souls anſwer to this effect, Lord, we did indeed many times think of our Sins, and did take up Reſolutions to Repent, and to ſeek for Pardon and Mercy; but there ſtands that Enemy of our Souls, that was always diſcouraging us, that was always perſwading us that we ſhould Recover, and would not ſuffer us to ſpeak of our end; ſo that Lord, that very Perſon was the Inſtrument, in the hand of Satan, that ruin'd our Souls. And tho' this Plea will not be ſufficient to ſave theſe Souls from Hell, becauſe they hearkened to theſe Deluſions, rathen than to the Word of God, yet it will be a great Aggravation of your Torments. Take then this timely Reproof, and Repent of

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this your Sin, before it be too late, and inſtead of perſwading others of a long Life, prepare daily for Death your ſelves, and preſs others to do the ſame, that you may have the Blood of no poor Soul to be charged on you at the day of Judgment.

2*dly*. Is it ſo, that our Lives are thus fading and uncertain? Then the Second *uſe* may be a *uſe* of Inſtruction. And Firſt, it ſhould teach us to become Humble. We ſhould remember that we are but Duſt and Aſhes, and therefore ſhould not have high and lofty Thoughts of our ſelves; it ſhould teach us too not to pamper our Fleſh, making Gods of our Bellies, and glorying in our Shame, ſeeing we know not but that this Carcaſe which we feed exceſſively to Day, may be Meat for Worms to Morrow: neither let us be exceſſive in our Attire, nor proud of our outward Beauty; for why ſhould we be proud of that, which, at the beſt, is but refin'd Clay, and cemented Aſhes? Phil. 3.19

Aſhes? But, I fear, few will hearken to this Inſtruction: O the Pride, the abominable Pride that abounds amongſt us! What exceſſive coſt is beſtow'd upon a poor, frail Body, a lump of Earth, that in a little time will become a ſtinking Carcaſe? O the many precious Hours that are ſpent between the Comb and the Glaſs! that might, and ought to be ſpent in Prayer, and Mourning for Sin, and preparing for Eternity! Surely, ſuch Perſons as theſe never think of dying, nor conſider ſeriouſly of their Mortality; if they did, certainly, if
Tim.4.2. their Conſciences were not ſeared, as with a hot Iron, they would be humbled. What would you think of that Perſon, that had an Halter about his Neck, and was juſt a going to be turn'd off from the Ladder, that ſhould call for fine Apparel, for Wine, and delicious Meats, when there was but a few moments between him and Death? Would you not think him Mad, and out of his Senſes! O ye proud

proud Ones, this is your Caſe; you are juſt lanching into Eternity, juſt dropping into Hell, and yet you are priding your ſelves in Vanity, and admiring your own Imperfections, gratifying of your Luſts, and pleaſing your *Senſes*, and waſting your precious time, when as yet you are in the Gall of Bitterneſs, and in the Bonds of Iniquity: O conſider theſe things, and be wiſe, Repent, before you are paſt Repentance, and lie low at the Foot-ſtool of God's Mercy, and beg for the pardon of your *Sins*: O, How can you be at Peace, while God is your Enemy, and your poor Souls in an undone State and Condition? O how can you walk proudly, and take any Delight in your ſelves, that know not, but in a few Moments more you may be in the midſt of everlaſting Burnings? O, inſtead of adorning your Bodies, and feeding your Fleſh, endeavour to get your Souls adorned with Grace, which will become you much better, than your

your moſt gay, and coſtly Garments, and to be fed with the Bread of Life; and inſtead of having proud and lofty Thoughts of your ſelves, learn to be humble; conſider what an excellent Grace Humility is, how much it renders you like to Chriſt your Lord; and how much it will gain you eſteem among the beſt and wiſeſt of Men; whereas Pride makes you like to the Devil, and makes you deſpiſed of God and good Men, and 'tis that Sin which is a certain Preſage of your Ruine; *for Pride goeth before Deſtruction, and an haughty Spirit before a Fall*; but new Humility, as one ſays, is that which renders us truly Honorable, and illuſtrious; it puts a luſtre upon all our Accompliſhments, and a reſplendent brightneſs upon all our other Graces; it adorns our Duties, and covers our Deformities; it's like a Crown of Gold beſet with ſparkling Gemms, which gives a ſhew of Majeſty to the Royal Head that wears it; it makes us like our Glori-

v. 16.

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ous Saviour, and conforms us to our Bleſſed Head; it proves us to be his Diſciples, *who commands us to learn of him to be meek and lowly in Heart.* Matt. 11. 29.

2*dly.* The Conſideration of the Frailty of our Lives ſhould teach us not to defer our Repentance; we ſhould neglect it no longer, for the time of our departure is at hand, and when this frail Life is ended, our Work is done; *for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom in the Grave,* whither we are all going. Eccl. 9. 10. Perhaps you are thinking, we will Repent when we are Old, or many Years hence; conſider, late Repentance is ſeldom ſafe. Some of you, it may be, have ſet a ſhorter time, and ſay we will to Morrow: O Sirs! How do you know but that this Night your Breath may be ſtopt, and your Souls required? If you Repent not ſpeedily, probably you may never Repent. I have Read a ſad Story of a Gentleman, who on his Death-bed fancied he ſaw Spirits come to drag him

him into Hell, who after bitter crying and ſhrieking died: crying out, with a loud Voice, *Give me reſpite till to Morrow!* But why do I tell you of him? How many have we heard upon their Death Beds, crying out of their miſ-ſpent time, ſaying; *O Fools that we were, that have lived ſo many Years, and have done nothing for our poor Souls, that have enjoyed ſo many Sabbaths, and heard ſo many Sermons, and have had ſo many wholſome Inſtructions given us, and many Prayers put up for us, and many Offers of Grace and Mercy; and yet Wretches that we are, have ſlighted all, and loved our Sins to the ruine of our Souls; O call back time! O Lord, let us live a little longer, that we may Repent: O how ſhall we be able to endure the Eternal Flames of thy Vengeance?* Theſe, and ſuch like, are uſually the Complaints of many poor Creatures, when they come to Die, but to no purpoſe; time is paſt, the day of Grace is done, and they are undone for ever. O therefore, I be-

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ſeech you, reſolve now upon a Reformation; don't delay time; don't venture to lie down this Night in your Sins, leſt in the Morning you awake in Hell. You Fooliſh Ones that are galloping to Hell, ſtop a little, and hear me; think what a ſad Condition you will be in, if you don't Repent, before you Die; without Repentance, know, that you cannot be ſaved: Do you ſtill ſay 'tis time enough? O deceive not your ſelves, this Night, for ought you know, God may ſay, you muſt give an account of your Stewardſhips, for you muſt be no longer Stewards. You will Repent, hereafter, you ſay, and ſo you have ſaid, perhaps, for many Years, and yet the time is not come; ſo it is to be fear'd you'll put it off, till at length your Sun will be ſet, and then you are undone: O how many have reckon'd, as you do, that are now in Hell, promiſed Reformation, and intended it; but Death came before this was done, and now they are miſerable.

ſerable. And yet you go on in the ſame Road, and will not be perſwaded to an immediate Repentance. O that the Almighty would ſtop you before you fall into Hell. O that Mercy might take hold of you, before you are miſerable. O that I could prevail upon you to become more ſenſible of the danger that does attend you every moment, while you are in your Sins. O that you would paſs me a Promiſe now, that by the help of God, you would not live in your Sins a day, an hour, yea not a moment longer. Sirs, I mean you no harm, all that I deſire, is, that you might be ſaved, that ſo your precious Souls might not be fuel for the flames of God's Vengeance. Don't look upon me as your Enemy, becauſe I tell you the Truth; I tell you no more than what God's Word tells you, that if you Die in your Sins you muſt be damn'd. And O what pity is it, that ſo many precious Souls as are here at this time, ſhould be made Brands of Hell!

Luke 13. 3. 5.

Hell. O my God! let thy word convince them, be thou pleaſed to awaken theſe poor Creatures, out of their ſecurity; Lord, let theſe dead Souls live, quicken them with thy Grace; Lord, they are not ſenſible of their miſery, by nature; they will not be perſwaded to leave their pleaſures, their profits, their honours, for Heaven, and Glory, and Chriſt, and Grace, and thy Bleſſed ſelf; and tho they are at the brink of Hell, yet, Lord, they will not leave their ſins: Death is ready to ſeize them, Hell ſtands open to receive 'em; the Sword of thy vengeance hangs over them, and all this while they are ſecure: the Drunkards, and the Swearers, and the Sabbath-breakers, the Lyers, the deſpiſers of the People, the Proud, and all the other ranks of ſinners, are not in the leaſt concern'd, nor perſwaded to Repentance: they live as if there was no Hell, no eternal Torments, they go on without remorſe: O Lord, for Chriſt's ſake, turn and

convert them, that their Souls may live, that when thou ſhalt command them hence, they may depart with joy. And to this end do thou enable them to die daily to Sin, and to live unto Holineſs, that they may hereafter dwell with thee in Glory.

3*ly*. This conſideration of the frailty of our lives, ſhould teach us to mind our Souls in the firſt place, to provide for them before we concern our ſelves with any thing elſe, ſeek Heaven firſt. O get a heavenly treaſure before you mind an earthly one! get Grace before Gold, and if you will do thus, you need not fear wanting any thing of this world, that is needfull for you: God promiſes that all theſe things he will give you. But this advice is ('tis to be fear'd) taken little notice of by many in the world; what is the uſual proviſion Parents make for their Children? Is it not the things of this world? perhaps they'll anſwer, why, we can't give 'em Grace, that is the gift of God.

Matth. 6. 33.

God. 'Tis true, but can't you pray for them? can't you ſet them examples of Piety, and inſtruct them in the things of God, and bring them up in the fear of the Lord? This is your Duty: and by the bleſſing of God, it might have prov'd effectual to their Salvation: but alas! if we can but provide well for their Bodies, 'tis no great matter now a days, what becomes of their poor Souls; and when perſons come to years of diſcretion, which way are they uſually inclin'd? Is it not to the World? and inſtead of inquiring how they may get Grace, and become Holy, and provide for Eternity, they are inquiring, as thoſe, who will ſhew us any good? who will direct us how we may have the things of this world, and help us to become Rich, and great here: O Sirs, 'tis a ſign by this, that you think not of the frailty of your lives, that you are dying Creatures, you think not how ſoon you may be in Hell. O be perſwaded to do this Pſal. 4. 6.

work firſt, for fear it never be done, and then you will be eternally undone: remember that you are to be here but a ſhort time; O therefore be working while the day laſts, leſt the night of Death overtake you, and then you will be paſt Working, paſt Repenting, paſt Mercy. Take example by the worldling, don't you ſee what pains he takes to fill his Coffers, to encreaſe his Trade, to advance his worldly intereſt, he matters not the breaking of his reſt, and neglecting his food, nor of tyring his body, ſo he can but get the things of this world. And ſhall we be idle, and careleſs, and negligent? whereas if we do our duties, we ought, we ſhall obtain far greater Riches, even heavenly Treaſures. That which the worldling labours for is but vanity: but that which the godly labour for is eternal glory, and they ſhall have it if they perſevere to the end. Let too, the reſt of the ungodly quicken you, obſerve what haſt they make to Heli,

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as if they fear'd they ſhould be belated: and ſhall we loyter in our way, and neglect to be diligent? O ſtir up your ſelves, and be more active in praying, and hearing, and receiving the Sacrament, in holy conference and the like; mend your pace, your time is but ſhort, and your work is great that you have to do, and unleſs you are ſpeedy, you'l never reach your journie's end: ſet out betimes for Heaven, in the morning of your life; for you will meet with a great many hindrances by the way, and certainly you will fall ſhort, if your time be gone before your work be done: and tho' you do not think that this is the beſt counſel now, yet when you come to die, you will wiſh that you had taken it. When you find that you muſt leave the world, then you will wiſh, O that we had minded Heaven and our Souls, when we had time! And tho' I do not deny but that you may find mercy in the hour of Death,

yet let me tell you, you run a great hazzard; you have one inſtance of this,
Luke 27. 34. the Thief on the Croſs, but where have you another? As one ſays, there was one, that none might diſpair, and but one, that none might preſume: let not this then be your Rule, for the neglect of your ſpeedy ſeeking after Heaven: for what reaſon have you to imagine, that when you have ſpent all your time in ſin, that God ſhould look upon you in your laſt moments? when you can ſin no longer, then you'l repent, or when you are not able to mind the world, then you'l mind your Souls. O let not this be your practice, but firſt provide for your eternal happineſs, aſſure to your ſelves an inheritance in Heaven, venture not to live any longer without this aſſurance, leſt you are ſnatched away ſuddainly, and then your Souls are undone to Eternity. Be not ſo fond of the world, as to loſe your Souls for it, but *give all poſſible*
2 Pet. 1. 10. *diligence to make your calling & election ſure*:

ſure: that ſo an entrance may be miniſtred unto you abundantly, into the everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

3dly. The laſt *uſe* may be a *uſe* of comfort to the Godly. Is the Life of Man thus Frail? Then this may be matter of great Conſolation to the people of God under afflictions, of what kind or nature ſoever they be. It may be you are poor and in a mean, low, deſpiſed condition, conſider, 'tis but a litle while, and you ſhall be made rich, and honourable, and great. Now it may be you want the neceſſaries of this Life, Food and Raiment, and other outward Comforts, and can find no relief. Let not this diſcourage your Souls, for yet a little while and you ſhall have no need of theſe things, Rev. 7. 16. you ſhall be where you ſhall hunger no more, nor thirſt any more, neither ſuffer any more cold, or nakedneſs. It may be your bodies are ſubject to ſharp and ſevere diſtempers, ſuch as the Stone, or Gout, and are

ſeldom at eaſe; yet notwithſtanding be not caſt down, for theſe your miſeries cannot laſt long, becauſe your lives are but ſhort; tho' your pains are laſting, yet they are not everlaſting. And when you come to Heaven, you will be perfectly freed from all pain and miſery, from all infirmities and diſeaſes. The Apoſtle calls our afflictions light, that is comparatively, in reſpect of the weight of Glory; and by reaſon of that ſupport God affords his people under afflictions; and that theſe laſt but a moment, that is in compariſon of Eternity: and withall give us this further comfort, that theſe light and momentary afflictions work for us a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of Glory: every word hath weight, Καθ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν, which Emphatical Greciſm, becauſe other tongues cannot word by word expreſs to the full, they are forced to uſe words and phraſes which excell all compariſon, as *mire ſupra modum*, Eraſ. *ſupra modum*

2 Cor. 4. 17.
Vid. Clark in loc.

Vid. Leigh's Crit. Sac. in loc.

dum in ſublimitate, Vulg. Lat. *excellenter excellens*, Beza. O how far doth your condition exceed the condition of the Wicked, although they have what their hearts can wiſh of the things of this world! yet theſe things will ſtand them in little ſtead in a dying hour, then (if their Conſciences come to be convinced of ſin) what would they give to be in your condition, how freely would they part with all their Gold for Grace, and give all for a ſaving Intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt? but alas! that will not purchaſe it, and ſo the poor Creatures are eternally undone; their comfort was but for a moment, and their miſery is to Eternity; where as your miſery is but for a moment, and then you will be eternally happy: Then you ſhall ſigh no more, neither ſorrow Rev. 21. 4. any more, for all Tears and Sorrows ſhall then be wiped away: then you will be out of the reach of all your Ene-

Enemies. There the Widow and the Fatherleſs ſhall be no more oppreſſed, nor the poor deſpiſed: there the needy ſuffer no want, nor the diſeaſed feel any pain, but all are perfectly Happy and Bleſſed. Therefore lift up your heads with rejoycing; becauſe your redemption draws nigh: 'twill not be long e're theſe earthly Tabernacles of yours be diſſolved, and then all your ſorrows and afflictions will be ended. What Traveller that hath paſſed many dangerous ways, is not glad when he draws near to his own home? and ſhall not we much more rejoyce, (that are but ſtrangers, and Pilgrims here) that we are come ſo near to that eternal reſt, which is prepared for us, and for all thoſe that are in Chriſt? O what would the damned in Hell, give to be in your caſe? it would greatly leſſen their miſery, if they were but ſure that their torments

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ſhould come to an end; but that which is the miſery of miſeries, is this, that their torments are Eternal. And as your ſufferings are nothing in Compariſon of theirs; ſo likewiſe may you be of good cheer under the ſevereſt of them, knowing that in a little time they ſhall have an end. I know that the beſt of God's Children are ſometimes prone to deſpiſe the chaſtnings of the Lord, and to faint under his Rebukes, and are apt under Afflictions to think hardly of God; but this is their Sin and frailty: whereas if we did conſider the Relation God ſuſtains when he afflicts us, we ſhould think otherwiſe; he afflicts us in the quality of a Father; our Earthly Parents indeed many times err in giving Correction, but in God there is a perfect Union of Wiſdom, and Love, of Diſcretion and Tenderneſs; his Affection is without the leaſt Imperfection; his Will is always guided by infinite Wiſdom; if his Children of-

Vid. Dr. B *in his Sermon, in the Supplement to the morning Exercise.*

offend, he will Chaſtiſe them
Sam. 7. 4. with the Rod of Men, that is, moderately; for as in Scripture things are magnified by the Epithet, Divine, or of God, ſo they are leſſened by the Epithet, Humane: accordingly the
Cor. 10. 3. Apoſtle declares to the *Corinthians*, *That no temptation hath befallen them, but what was common to Man; but God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the Temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear it.* As a prudent Phyſician conſults the ſtrength of the Patient, as well as the quality of his Diſeaſe, and proportions his Medicine; ſo all the bitter ingredients, their mixture and meaſure, are diſpenſed by the wiſe Preſcription of God, according to the degrees of ſtrength that are in his People. Now this being ſo, it is that which ſhould quiet us under Afflictions, remembring that God as a Father, and not as an Enemy corrects

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us, and that he will (while we ſuffer) enable us to bear our ſufferings, and in a little time will wholly deliver us from them, by taking us to himſelf: and then we may bid all our Afflictions and Troubles an everlaſting farewel.

2*dly*. The Conſideration of the frailty of our Lives affords matter of Comfort to the People of God, in that Death will free them from ſinning againſt God, and put them out of fear of the Temptations of Satan, and of being overcome by the World, and their own prevailing Corruptions; and certainly nothing can be more welcome to a gracious Soul than this; for what is it that makes a true Child of God go mourning all the day long? What is it that makes their Hearts heavy, and their Countenances ſad but Sin, and the Temptations that do attend them, to draw them from God? So that they cannot Pray, nor hear, nor perform any Duty without

without Sin, nor without being disturbed, and molested by that grand Enemy of our Souls, the Devil; this is that that makes them cry out with
om. 7. 24. the Apostle, *Who shall deliver me?* O says the Soul, What a trouble is it to me, to see that I can't serve God as I would, and do desire to serve him! that I am thus subject to offend him whom my Soul loveth, and in whom I delight! O what would I give that I were free from these great Enemies of my Soul, the World, Sin, and Satan, that seek my Destruction? And tho' by the Assistance of Divine Grace, I am enabled so to resist them, as that they make not a Prey of my Soul; yet notwithstanding they greatly impede, and hinder me in my way, and grievously disturb and distract me in my Duty, and drag me into Sin: Well, O Soul, be not cast down, 'tis but a little while, and thou shalt have what thou longest for, there may be but a step between thee and Heaven;

Heaven; thou art here this Year, thou mayſt be in Heaven before the next; here this Day, and in Glory the next; nay, tho' thou art here this hour, perhaps you may be in Heaven the next; and then thou ſhalt ſin no more, nor be tempted any more, neither complain of thy prevailing Corruptions; thou ſhalt be freed from all the Enemies of thy Soul, and nothing ſhall hinder thee from continual loving, and praiſing God, and that for ever, without any diſtraction or diſturbance; therefore when thou beginneſt to be overcome with grief and ſorrow, becauſe of Sin, and the prevalency of thy own Corruptions, together, with the Temptations of Satan, and the Deceitfulneſs of thy own Heart; reaſon the Caſe with thy Soul, and ſay, Why art thou caſt down, O my Soul? And why art thou perplex'd beyond meaſure? Thou art indeed ſurrounded with Enemies, and art guilty

guilty of many ſins, and back-ſlidings from God, yet the time of thy Deliverance draws near; and therefore be not diſcouraged, when the Thread of this frail Life is cut; why then thou ſhalt go to thy God, with whom thou ſhalt be bleſſed for ever, and ſhalt be wholly freed from all theſe thy Enemies, and ſhalt join with Angels and Saints, in ſinging everlaſting praiſes to the moſt high. And here do not miſtake me, I will not have you think, that I am perſwading the Godly not to mourn at all for ſin, and their offences againſt God; for certainly a true Child of God can't refrain from mourning for its ſins; nay, this is a ſign of a truly gracious Soul, all that I aim at is to comfort them in this Condition, that ſo they may not fall under this their Soul-Trouble, but be ſtill going forward, knowing that in God's appointed time, they ſhall be delivered from ſin, and from all the Temptations

tions of the Devil. And as that Diſcourſe is certainly comfortable to Perſons in great pain, that gives them an account of a Medicine that may eaſily be had, which will give them immediate eaſe and relief; ſo certainly it muſt needs be a comfort to a Child of God, to hear that it ſhall be delivered from that which cauſes its greateſt trouble, and ſorrow, and that it ſhall be ſpeedily too, makes the comfort the greater: 'tis a comfort to be aſſured that ſuch a time will come; but to know, and be aſſured that it will come quickly is a greater conſolation; to be aſſured that we ſtand in a continual poſſibility, to be advanced to eternal Happineſs. O what Raptures of Joy muſt the Holy Soul needs be in, that ſeriouſly conſiders this? They enjoy, indeed, a great deal of comfort, in enjoying Communion with God, here in his Ordinances; and in that

they are ſatisfied, that tho' they ſin in Duty, yet their Hearts being upright, their performances are accepted in Chriſt: but ſtill the *Soul* is under trouble and grief for Sin, and it finds no full ſatisfaction in this Life; but now the good Tidings of a Releaſe; O how welcome muſt this needs be? Surely, the truly gracious *Soul* hath great cauſe to bleſs God that this is not its abiding place, and that its Life is thus frail: to be ſure it is often ſaying with the Apoſtle, Phil. 1.23. *I deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better*; yea, beſt of all, I am in pain to be delivered from my Sins, and Temptations, and Imperfections; and having done my Work, I long to receive that glorious Reward that is laid up for them that fear thee, and truſt in thee.

3*dly*. And Laſtly, This Conſideration of the frailty and uncertainty of

of our Lives, affords matter of comfort to the People of God, in that they are ſhortly to be ſeparated from the wicked and ungodly; to be taken from thoſe that vex their Righteons Souls from day to day, by their blaſpheming of the Holy Name of God, and belching out Oaths to his Diſhonour; by their Curſing, and Lying, and Drunkenneſs, and Prophaneneſs, and Debauchery; by their breaking God's Sabbaths, and polluting his Ordinances; by their hating, and deſpiſing, and perſecuting his People: For ſuch is the implacableneſs of their Spirits, that they would not ſuffer (if it were poſſible) a Holy Perſon to live upon the Earth; ſo that they are a continual Trouble to a Child of God: And it muſt needs be grievous to a Holy Soul, to live in the midſt of ſuch wicked Creatures, to be-

hold their abominable impieties, and to hear their dreadful execrable Oaths, and to ſee their enmity againſt God, and Goodneſs, and their ſtrivings to overthrow Chriſtianity, and their bitterneſs againſt the Saints: This makes them weary of living here, as *Lot* was of *Sodom*, becauſe of their filthy and wicked Converſations; but let not ſuch be over much grieved becauſe of this; for it is but a little while, and you ſhall be delivered; you know not but that in a few moments more you may be in Heaven, and then you ſhall hear no more Oaths, nor Curſes, nor be troubled with the company of the Wicked; you ſhall weep no more becauſe of their Wickeneſs, nor ſuffer any more by their Hands; for you will then be above them, ſafe, and ſecure; and the time will come, when you ſhall

2 Pet. 2. 7, 8.

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ſee theſe wretched Creatures (unleſs they timely repent) at the left hand of Chriſt; then they will mourn, when you ſhall rejoice; and they that were the Authors of your Troubles, and Sorrows, when you were upon Earth, ſhall be tormented for ever in Hell: Hear me then, ye Righteous Ones, and Rejoice, in that you ſhall ſhortly have ſuch a gracious Releaſe, and make uſe of this when you are ready to be overwhelmed with Sorrow, becauſe of the crying Sins and Oppreſſions of thoſe that you dwell in the midſt of, and ſay, Well (bleſſed be God) we ſhall not be always in this Condition; nay, we ſhall ſuffer but a little while, and then we ſhall have a perfect Freedom. Conſider too, that theſe wretched Creatures muſt give an account to the great God of all their ungod- Jude 15

godly Deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard Speeches which they have ſpoken againſt you; you are now accounted the worſt of man-kind, and are ſhunn'd as if you were infectious Perſons, and are reproached, and hated, and deſpiſed; but the day, and the time is coming, when God will right your Cauſe before all the World, and they ſhall be aſhamed of their Actions; tho' now they boaſt in their Wickedneſs, he ſhall then acquit you from all the Imputations of guilt, that are now caſt upon you, and pronounce you to be Heirs of Glory: And theſe your Enemies ſhall be turned into Hell; now you are hated of your Neighbours, Acquaintance, and Friends, and all becauſe you fear God. You can't live at quiet nor eat your own bread in peace,

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becauſe of the wicked that trouble you: You are become a Reproach to all that are about you, you have none to take your part, nor to plead your Cauſe, all ſtand at a diſtance from you: Theſe things, indeed, are grievous, and muſt of neceſſity be a trouble to the People of God; nay, ſometimes, by reaſon of the hard uſage they have from the World; they may be near ſinking, even into Deſpair; but when you come to conſider that you are near to be deliver'd, certainly, this will revive you; this being that which you deſire, and long for, and pray for; therefore, take that Counſel: *Reſt in the Lord, and wait patiently for him, fret not thy ſelf becauſe of him who proſpereth in his way, becauſe of the Man who bringeth wicked Devices to paſs*; ſubmit your ſelves quietly to his Will,

Pſal. 79. 4.

Pſal. 37. 7. 9.

Will, without murmuring, or repining; for notwithſtanding all their Malice, thoſe that wait upon the Lord ſhall inherit the Earth, *i.e.* they ſhall enjoy ſuch a Portion of theſe outward things, as God ſees good for them, notwithſtanding the rage of their Enemies, and their attempts to the contrary. They can't go one ſtep further than God permits them, nor act any thing more than what he gives them leave to do. The Devil himſelf, you ſee, that is the Captain of theſe wicked ones, could not do any thing to *Job*, till God gave him leave. Therefore let theſe things be your comfort whilſt you are here among the wicked, and are thus perplexed by them: Conſidering likewiſe, that it is not long you have to abide here, perhaps a few Months, or a few Weeks,

Vid. Clark in loc.

Job. 1.12.

Weeks, or a few Days; nay, it may be but a few Hours, or Moments, and then you will be where you know there is no Enemy to moleſt or trouble you, no bad Company to diſquiet you, but you will be of the Society of Angels and Souls of Prophets and Apoſtles, of Patriarchs and Martyrs; and of all your Godly Relations, and Friends, in whom you delighted when they were on Earth: and that were fellow-ſufferers with you, till it pleaſed God to releaſe them, and ſhall joyn with them in praiſing your God, and that for ever more.

Having now ſpoken what I intended on this Subject, I come to conclude. You have now heard what a fading periſhing thing the life of Man is, that it is ſubject to be taken from us every moment, and that we are not certain how

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ſoon we may depart hence; and you have been perſwaded (with all the earneſtneſs I could uſe) to a ſpeedy Repentance of your ſins, and to turn to God, and that now, leſt it never be done. Now, Sirs, what do you reſolve upon? what anſwer muſt I return to him that ſent me? Muſt I go and tell him, Lord, I have been wooing, entreating, and beſeeching poor ſinners, in thy name to Repent, and to ſeek after Salvation, and that ſpeedily; becauſe of the frailty of their lives, and the danger that is in delayed Prayers: Telling 'em, that they may be in Hell before that time comes that they have ſet to ſeek unto Thee, but they will not hearken; they turn a deaf Ear to thy Word; they ſay they are not at leiſure, to mind theſe things yet. Nay ſome are re-

reſolved to get the world, and to live in ſin, though they loſe their Souls; they will not be perſwaded though they are upon the borders of Eternity, though they are juſt dropping into Hell. I ſay, will you ſend me away with ſuch a meſſage as this to my God? Or muſt I go and tell him, Lord, I have this day declar'd thy truth unto poor ſinners, and have preſſed them to become thine: Many that were running headlong to Hell I have called unto to turn and eſcape thy Vengeance, which hangs over their heads; and not to neglect ſeeking after Life any longer, becauſe they are dying Creatures. And now, Father, I come to ſhew thee what acceptance thy Word hath found amongſt them. They are willing to have their ſins, rather than loſe their Souls; they are willing to

turn

turn, rather than burn for ever in the flames of thy Vengeance, They are crying out for mercy in Chriſt, and inquiring what they ſhall do to be ſaved. They deſire to be pray'd for that they may not periſh; they long to be at peace with thee, they are not willing to lie down one night more in their ſins, they long and earneſtly deſire to be reconcil'd unto thee, they are lamenting their former provocations againſt thee, and beſeech thee to look upon them in Chriſt, and for his ſake to pardon their ſins, and admit them into Covenant with thy ſelf. They promiſe obedience unto thee as long as they live, and will here engage (by the aſſiſtance of Divine Grace) to offend thee wilfully, and willingly no more. O that I might carry ſuch a meſſage as this from you to my

my Maſter! O how ſoon would you find him ready to embrace you in the Arms of his Mercy, and to pardon your ſins. O that you were but as willing to be reconcil'd to God, as God is to be reconcil'd to you, how ſoon would the match be made between him and your Souls? O for Chriſt's ſake let me prevail upon you to become his, put him off no longer, make no more excuſes; but now, now give up your ſelves unto him! O live the reſt of your time in preparing for Death: Look upon every day as your laſt day, and every hour as your laſt hour, and every moment as your laſt moment; that ſo Death may not ſurpriſe you when he comes, nor find you idle. Work whilſt 'tis day, get your Accounts ready, and your Evidences clear for Heaven, that when you come

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to dye, you may have nothing elſe to do but to dye. That you may be able to ſpeak thoſe comfortable words of the Apoſtle, when you come to lye upon a death-bed, (with which I ſhall cloſe.) *I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord the righteous judge ſhall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them alſo that love his appearing.*

2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.

FINIS.